

U.S. House Speaker Pelosi arrives in Taiwan, defying Beijing



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Associated Press

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U.S. House Speaker Pelosi arrives in Taiwan, defying Beijing

By HUIZHONG WU and EILEEN NG

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi arrived in Taiwan late Tuesday, becoming the highest-ranking American official in 25 years to visit the self-ruled island claimed by China, which quickly announced that it would conduct military maneuvers in retaliation for her presence. Pelosi arrived aboard a U.S. Air Force passenger jet and was greeted on the tarmac at Taipei's international airport by Taiwan's foreign minister and other Taiwanese and American officials. She posed for photos before her motorcade whisked her unseen into the parking garage of a hotel. Her visit has ratcheted up tension between China and the United States because China claims Taiwan as part of its territory, and it views visits by foreign government officials as recognition of the island's sovereignty.

The Biden administration, and Pelosi, say the United States remains committed to its "one-China policy," which recognizes Beijing but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei.

The speaker framed the trip as part of a broader mission at a time when "the world faces a choice between autocracy and democracy." Her visit comes after she led a congressional delegation to the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv in the spring, and it serves as a capstone to her many years of promoting democracy abroad.

"We must stand by Taiwan," she said in an opinion piece published by The Washington Post on her arrival in Taiwan. She cited the commitment that the U.S. made to a democratic Taiwan under a 1979 law.

"It is essential that America and our allies make clear that we never give in to autocrats," she wrote.

Taiwan and China split during a civil war in 1949, but China claims the island as its own territory and has not ruled out using military



In this photo released by the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, center pose for photos after she arrives in Taipei, Taiwan, Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2022.

Associated Press

force to take it.

The Biden administration did not explicitly urge Pelosi to call off her plans. It repeatedly and publicly assured Beijing that the visit would not signal any change in U.S. policy toward Taiwan.

Soon after Pelosi's arrival, China announced a series of military operations and drills, which followed promises of "resolute and strong measures" if Pelosi went through with her visit.

The People's Liberation Army said the maneuvers would take place starting Tuesday night in the waters and skies near Taiwan and include the firing of long-range ammunition in the Taiwan Strait.

"This action is a solemn deterrent against the recent major escalation of the negative actions of the United States on the Taiwan issue, and a serious warning to the 'Taiwan independence' forces seeking 'independence.'"

China's official Xinhua News said the army planned to conduct live-fire drills from Aug. 4 to 7 across multiple locations. An image released by the news agency indicated that the drills were to take place in six different areas in the waters surrounding Taiwan.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Washington's betrayal "on the Taiwan issue is bankrupting its national credibility."

"Some American politicians are playing with fire on the issue of Taiwan," Wang said in a statement that referred to the U.S. as "the world's biggest saboteur of peace."

Back in the United States, 26 Republican lawmakers issued a statement of rare bipartisan support for the Democratic speaker. The statement called trips by members of Congress to Taiwan routine.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell said he backed Pelosi's visit as a display of support for Taiwan's democracy and said any allegations that her itinerary was provocative are "utterly absurd."

"I believe she has every right to go," McConnell said in a Senate speech.

The trip was not officially announced ahead of time. Barricades were erected outside the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Taipei. Journalists and onlookers thronged the streets just outside and pressed against the hotel's lobby windows as they awaited Pelosi's motorcade. Two buildings in the capital lit up LED displays with words of welcome, including the iconic Taipei 101 building, which said "Welcome to Taiwan, Speaker Pelosi."

China has stepped up overflights and other provocative moves toward Taiwan and other neighboring territory in recent years, assert-

ing broad claims of its rights around the region.

China's military threats have driven concerns about a new crisis in the 100-mile-wide (140-kilometer) Taiwan Strait that could roil global markets and supply chains.

The White House on Monday decried Beijing's rhetoric, saying the U.S. has no interest in deepening tensions with China and "will not take the bait or engage in saber rattling."

White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby underscored that the decision about whether to visit Taiwan was ultimately Pelosi's.

"Put simply, there is no reason for Beijing to turn a potential visit consistent with longstanding U.S. policy into some sort of crisis or use it as a pretext to increase aggressive military activity in or around the Taiwan Strait," Kirby said.

U.S. officials have said the American military will increase its movements in the Indo-Pacific region during Pelosi's visit. The aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and its strike group were in the Philippine Sea on Monday, according to officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military operations.

The Reagan, the cruiser USS Antietam and the destroyer USS Higgins left Singapore after a port visit and moved north to their home port in

Japan. The carrier has an array of aircraft, including F/A-18 fighter jets and helicopters, on board as well as sophisticated radar systems and other weapons.

Meanwhile, Taiwan's Defense Ministry said early Wednesday that China had sent 21 planes flying toward Taiwan, 18 of them fighter jets. The rest included an early warning plane and an electronic warfare plane.

Beijing sees official American contact with Taiwan as encouragement to make the island's decades-old de facto independence permanent, a step U.S. leaders say they don't support. Pelosi, head of one of three branches of the U.S. government, is the highest-ranking elected American official to visit Taiwan since then-Speaker Newt Gingrich in 1997.

The flight-tracking site Flightradar24 said Pelosi's aircraft, an Air Force version of the Boeing 737, was the most tracked in the world on Tuesday evening with 300,000 viewers. The plane took a roundabout route, flying east over Indonesia rather than directly over the South China Sea.

Pelosi has used her position to be an emissary for the U.S. on the global stage. She has long challenged China on human rights, including traveling to Tiananmen Square in 1991, two years after China crushed a wave of democracy protests. In 2009, she hand-delivered a letter to then-President Hu Jintao calling for the release of political prisoners. She had sought to visit Taiwan's island democracy earlier this year before testing positive for COVID-19.

China has been steadily ratcheting up diplomatic and military pressure on Taiwan. China cut off all contact with Taiwan's government in 2016 after President Tsai Ing-wen refused to endorse its claim that the island and mainland together make up a single Chinese nation, with the Communist regime in Beijing being the sole legitimate government. □

Jill Biden on teaching as first lady: 'Knew I could do both'

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jill Biden says she didn't doubt that she could keep teaching as first lady and overcame the skepticism that she could handle both jobs by instructing her staff to "figure it out."

In a new interview in the September issue of Real Simple magazine, the first lady describes how she uses Post-it notes to manage her large family, and offers marriage advice to newlyweds hoping to celebrate 45 years of marriage as she and President Joe Biden did on June 17.

Biden is the first first lady to continue her career outside the White House.

"I think people were a little skeptical. Could I truly do it, since I was the first one to try it?" she said. "But I knew I wanted to teach."

She said she told her staff, "This is what I want to do.

We have to figure it out.' Biden continues to teach English and writing at Northern Virginia Community College, which is where she taught during the eight years her husband was vice president. Her staff back then also doubted that she could teach and serve as second lady, but she managed.

"I saw it work then, and I knew we could figure out how to do it now," she said. Biden doesn't like to use "juggling" or "balancing" to describe how she handles her responsibilities.

"You can't do anything in a haphazard way," she said. "You have to have purpose while you're doing it, and it has to be organized. That's the key to it."

To that end, she relies on Post-it notes to manage her family gatherings and save herself from having to explain things over and over. She sticks instructions

like "fill glasses with ice" or "light candles" to her kitchen cabinets so family arriving will know right away how to help.

"Everything is set up so when somebody comes in, they do what they want to do," she said.

The first lady also uses Post-it notes to communicate with the president.

"If I want to get a message to Joe, I put one on his mirror," she said.

"It may be a nice 'I missed you' or 'I hope you get whatever it is you're working on.'"

She said it's taken a lot of work for her and the president to get to 45 years of marriage. Both were married previously.

Joe Biden, 79, lost his first wife and infant daughter



First lady Jill Biden visits Schulze Academy, Thursday, July 21, 2022, in Detroit.

Associated Press

when the car she was driving collided with a truck in Delaware just before Christmas 1972. His two young sons were gravely injured. Jill Biden, 71, was divorced from her first husband.

"You have to work in any relationship, but especially in marriage. It's not always 50/50," she said. "Sometimes you lean on him, sometimes he leans on you."

Putin's rumored girlfriend hit with latest U.S. sanctions

By FATIMA HUSSEIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new round of U.S. sanctions targeting Russian elites includes a woman named in news reports as Vladimir Putin's longtime romantic partner.

The Treasury Department said Tuesday that the government has frozen the visa of Alina Kabaeva, an Olympic gymnast in her youth and former member of the state Duma, and imposed

other property restrictions. The department said she is also head of a Russian national media company that promotes Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Critics of the Kremlin and imprisoned Russian rights campaigner Alexey Navalny have been calling for sanctions against Kabaeva, saying her news outlet took the lead in portraying Western commentary on the invasion as a disinformation campaign.



Alina Kabaeva, a former champion rhythmic gymnast and now a Duma member for the pro-Kremlin United Russia party, attends the first plenary session of the newly-elected State Duma, the lower parliament chamber, Moscow, Russia, Jan. 13, 2012.

Associated Press



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Sandy Hook parents: Alex Jones claims created 'living hell'

By JIM VERTUNO

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Fighting back tears and finally given the chance to confront conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, the parents of a 6-year-old killed in the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary school shooting described being put through a "living hell" of death threats, harassment and ongoing trauma over the last decade caused by Jones using his media platforms to push claims that it was all a hoax.

Neil Heslin and Scarlett Lewis, whose son Jesse was killed at Sandy Hook, took the witness stand Tuesday on the final day of testimony in the two-week defamation damages trial against Jones and his media company Free Speech Systems. They are seeking at least \$150 million damages.

In a gripping exchange, Lewis spoke directly to Jones, who was sitting about 10 feet away. Earlier that day, Jones was on his broadcast program telling his audience that Heslin is "slow" and being manipulated by bad people.

"I am a mother first and foremost and I know you are a father. My son existed," Lewis said to Jones. "I am not deep state... I know you know that... And yet you're going to leave this courthouse and say it again on your show."

At one point, Lewis asked Jones: "Do you think I'm an



Alex Jones arrives at the Travis County Courthouse in Austin, Tuesday Aug. 2, 2022.

Associated Press

actor?"

"No, I don't think you're an actor," Jones responded before the judge admonished him to be quiet until called to testify.

Lewis continued trying to impress on Jones that the Sandy Hook shooting and trauma inflicted in the decade since then was real.

"It seems so incredible to me that we have to do this that we have to implore you, to punish you to get you to stop lying," Lewis said. "I am so glad this day is here. I'm actually relieved. And grateful... that I got to say all this to you."

Jones visibly shook his head several times while Scarlett Lewis was addressing him.

Heslin and Lewis are among several Sandy Hook fami-

lies who have filed several lawsuits alleging that Sandy Hook hoax claims pushed by Jones have led to years of abuse by Jones and his followers.

Heslin and Lewis both said they fear for their lives and have been confronted by strangers at home and on the street. Heslin said his home and car have been shot at. The jury heard a death threat sent via telephone message to another Sandy Hook family.

"I can't even describe the last nine and a half years, the living hell that I and others have had to endure because of the recklessness and negligence of Alex Jones," Heslin said.

Scarlett Lewis also described threatening emails

that seemed to have uncovered deep details of her personal life.

"It's fear for your life," Scarlett Lewis said. "You don't know what they were going to do."

Heslin said he didn't know if the Sandy Hook hoax conspiracy theory originated with Jones, but it was Jones who "lit the match and started the fire" with an online platform and broadcast that reached millions worldwide.

"What was said about me and Sandy Hook itself resonates around the world," Heslin said. "As time went on, I truly realized how dangerous it was."

Jones skipped Heslin's morning testimony while he was on his show a move

Heslin dismissed as "cowardly" but arrived in the courtroom for part of Scarlett Lewis' testimony. He was accompanied by several private security guards. "Today is very important to me and it's been a long time coming... to face Alex Jones for what he said and did to me. To restore the honor and legacy of my son," Heslin said when Jones wasn't there.

Heslin told the jury about holding his son with a bullet hole through his head, even describing the extent of the damage to his son's body. A key segment of the case is a 2017 Infowars broadcast that said Heslin didn't hold his son.

The jury was shown a school picture of a smiling Jesse taken two weeks before he was killed. The parents didn't receive the photo until after the shooting. They described how Jesse was known for telling classmates to "run!" which likely saved lives.

An apology from Jones wouldn't be good enough, the parents said.

"Alex started this fight," Heslin said, "and I'll finish this fight."

Heslin and Lewis suffer from a form of post-traumatic stress disorder that comes from constant trauma, similar to that endured by soldiers in war zones or child abuse victims, a forensic psychologist who studied their cases and met with them testified Monday. □

Utah man accused of causing wildfire by burning a spider



Firefighters battle a wildfire from the ground as a helicopter drops water above them in Springville on Monday, Aug. 1, 2022.

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A Utah man has been arrested on accusations he started a wildfire while trying to burn a spider with his lighter.

Cory Allan Martin, 26, told deputies that he spotted the spider Monday while he was in a hiking area in the foothills south of Salt Lake City near the city of Springville, shows a probable cause statement. He acknowledged starting the fire, but didn't explain why he was trying to burn the spider.

Deputies found a jar of

marijuana in his belongings, but he didn't appear to be high, said Utah County Sheriff's Sgt. Spencer Cannon.

There is no evidence to suggest he intentionally started the blaze, said Cannon, but he called it a reckless and puzzling decision. This area and most of Utah are bone dry amid extreme drought conditions.

"What led him to stop and notice a spider and decide to try to burn it, we don't know," Cannon said. "There may not be a why. He might not even know a

why."

Martin was arrested on suspicion of reckless burn and possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia, court documents show.

He was in the Utah County jail Tuesday on nearly \$2,000 bail. It was unknown if he had an attorney.

The wildfire quickly spread up the mountain and had burned less than 1 square mile (1 square kilometer) as of Tuesday, according to fire officials.

No homes had been damaged. □

Russia brands Ukrainian steel plant defenders terrorists

By SUSIE BLANN and SUZAN FRASER

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia's Supreme Court declared Ukraine's Azov Regiment a terrorist organization Tuesday, a move that could lead to terror charges against some of the captured fighters who made their last stand inside Mariupol's shattered steel plant.

Russia and its separatist allies are holding an estimated 1,000 Azov soldiers prisoner, many since their surrender at the steelworks in mid-May.

Russian authorities have opened criminal cases against them, accusing them of killing civilians. The addition of terrorism charges could mean fewer rights and longer prison sentences.

A terrorist organization leader could receive 15 to 20 years, and group members could get five to 10, according to Russian state media.

In testimony journalists were allowed to view, witnesses appearing before the Supreme Court supported the proposed terrorism designation, but most of the proceedings were held behind closed doors, so it was not known if any opponents testified.

"I can testify myself that Ukrainian snipers Azov snipers really shot civilians trying to escape the city" of Mariupol, Marina Akhmedova of the Presidential Council for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights testified. "I saw bodies lying on roads with my own eyes. There were many of them, and they were lying probably 10 meters apart from one another. There were no shell craters beside them."

In a statement, the Azov Regiment dismissed the ruling, accusing the Kremlin of "looking for new excuses and explanations for its war crimes." It urged the U.S. and other countries to declare Russia a terrorist state. The Azov soldiers played a key part in the defense of Mariupol, holding out for weeks at the southern



In this file photo provided by Azov Special Forces Regiment of the Ukrainian National Guard Press Office, a Ukrainian soldier inside the ruined Azovstal steel plant stands under a sunlight ray in his shelter in Mariupol, Ukraine, May 7, 2022.

Associated Press

port city's steel mill despite punishing attacks from Russian forces. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hailed them and the other defenders as heroes.

Moscow has repeatedly portrayed the Azov Regiment as a Nazi group and accused it of atrocities, but has publicly produced little evidence.

The regiment, a unit within Ukraine's National Guard, has a checkered past. It grew out of a group called the Azov Battalion, formed in 2014 as one of many volunteer brigades created to fight Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine. The battalion drew its initial fighters from far-right circles.

While its current members reject accusations of extremism, the Kremlin has seized on the regiment's right-wing origins to cast Russia's invasion as a battle against Nazi influence in Ukraine. Russian state media has repeatedly shown what it claimed to be Nazi insignias, literature and tattoos associated with the regiment.

Last week, dozens of Ukrainian POWs, including Azov fighters from the steel plant, were killed in an explosion at a prison barracks in Olenivka, an eastern town controlled by pro-Russian separatists. Moscow and

Kyiv have blamed each other, with Kyiv saying Russia blew up the barracks to cover up torture against the POWs.

In its ruling, the Supreme Court banned the Azov Regiment in Russia. That could also outlaw the regiment in areas of Ukraine occupied by Russian or

Russia-backed forces, if those territories go ahead with plans to become part of Russia.

Meanwhile, the first cargo ship loaded with grain to leave Ukraine since Russia invaded more than five months ago safely crossed the Black Sea and anchored just outside Istanbul on Tuesday en route to Lebanon, under an agreement Moscow and Kyiv signed last month to unblock Ukraine's agricultural exports and ease a global food crisis.

An estimated 20 million tons of grain have been stuck in Ukraine since the start of war. The U.N.-brokered agreement to release the grain calls for the establishment of safe corridors through the mined waters outside Ukraine's ports.

The Razoni, which set sail from the port of Odesa on Monday with more than 26,000 tons of corn, was scheduled for inspection Wednesday in Istanbul by a team of Russian, Ukrainian, Turkish and U.N. officials, as part of the deal.

More ships from Ukraine are expected to set out in the coming days. Some 27 vessels have been waiting in three Ukrainian ports with cargo and signed contracts, ready to go, said U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric. Global food prices have been soaring in a crisis blamed on the war, supply chain problems and COVID-19. □

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U.N. says Yemen's warring sides agree to renew existing truce

By **SAMY MAGDY**
Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The United Nations said Yemen's warring parties agreed Tuesday to renew an existing truce for another two months after concerted international efforts.

The already 4-month-old cease-fire has been the longest nationwide ease in fighting since the country's war began six years ago.

The U.N. envoy to Yemen Hans Grundberg said in a statement that the country's internationally recognized government and the Houthi rebels had also agreed to try to arrive at "an expanded truce agreement as soon as possible."

Yemen's civil war erupted in 2014, when the Houthis descended from their northern enclave and took over the capital, forcing the government to flee to the south before its exile in Saudi Arabia. A Saudi-led coalition then backed by the United States entered the war in early 2015 to try to restore the government to power. Since then, the conflict has turned into a proxy war between regional foes Saudi Arabia and Iran, which backs the Houthis.

The truce renewal an-



Houthi supporters attend a rally marking the seventh anniversary of the Saudi-led coalition's intervention in Yemen's war, in Sanaa, Yemen, March 26, 2022.

Associated Press

nouncement came hours after an Omani delegation concluded three days of talks with the Houthi leadership, including with the rebels' chief Abdel-Malek al-Houthi in the capital of Sanaa. Mohammed Abdel-Salam, the Houthi chief negotiator and spokesman, said on Twitter the talks focused on "consolidating chances of halting the war and lifting the blockade" imposed by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition.

The cease-fire initially took effect on April 2 and was extended June 2. However, there have been offensive actions during recent

months.

Both sides have publicly announced that they've bolstered their front-line positions, particularly around the oil-rich city of Marib, which the Houthis have been trying to seize for over a year. There were also shows of power through military parades featuring thousands of soldiers. The government and the Houthis both claimed to have documented dozens of truce violations on a weekly basis.

But the cease-fire has brought relief for Yemenis who have suffered from a decade of political turmoil

and conflict. Around a third of Yemen's 30 million population has been facing starvation due to the war and a lack of funding for humanitarian aid, according to the U.N. food agency.

Aside from the lull in violence, the truce established two commercial flights per week from Sanaa to Jordan and Egypt, after the country's airport was closed to passenger flights for years. It also allowed 36 vessels carrying fuel into the port of Hodeida over the course of four months. Both Sanaa and Hodeida are controlled by the Houthi rebels.

The truce has also called for opening the roads around Taiz, Yemen's third largest city, which the Houthis have besieged for years. But the rebels rejected two U.N. proposals to lift the blockade, according to the envoy office. Another item on the agenda is finding a way to pay the country's public servants, many of whom have gone with little or no salaries for years due to the civil strife.

Tuesday's extension fell short of a proposed six-month renewal of the cease-fire, according to a government official.

The Houthis had wanted more flights from Sanaa airport and more fuel vessels allowed to arrive in Hodeida to agree on that longer period. The internationally recognized government would not discuss the Houthi demands before the opening of Taiz roads, the official said. He spoke on condition anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. On Sunday, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with Rashad al-Alimi, head of the presidential government, to press for the truce renewal. He said the cease-fire "provides the best opportunity for peace in years — we must not let it slip away." □

Guatemala arrests migrant smugglers wanted by the U.S.



A Guatemalan police officer walks near alleged human traffickers, far right, who covered their faces, during a police raid against migrant smugglers near the Mexican border in Huehuetenango, Guatemala, Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2022.

Associated Press

By **SONIA PÉREZ D.**
Associated Press

HUEHUETENANGO, Guatemala (AP) — At dawn, police and federal agents with cover from helicopters

flying overhead raided a large ranch nestled among the mountains of northern Guatemala, not far from the border with Mexico.

Unlike the ranch's improv-

erished neighbors, inside authorities found horse stables, a swimming pool, late model vehicles, guns and a still drunk Felipe Diego Alonso, the alleged leader of a smuggling ring that moved migrants from Guatemala north to the United States.

The raid was part of several carried out Tuesday in four Guatemalan provinces against a migrant smuggling ring, for which authorities say they've documented \$2 million in revenue since 2019.

Alonso and three others arrested Tuesday were targets of U.S. prosecutors, wanted in connection with the death of a Guatemalan migrant in Texas last year. In total, authorities

nabbed 19 alleged members of the smuggling ring. The arrests came a month after 53 migrants, including 21 Guatemalans, died in a failed smuggling attempt when they were abandoned inside a sweltering trailer in San Antonio, Texas. There was no indication those arrested Tuesday were involved in the San Antonio tragedy.

The extradition of alleged migrant smugglers known as "coyotes" has been rare and these would be the first known cases in Guatemala of smugglers allegedly pursued for the death of a migrant in the United States. Prosecutions of migrant smugglers in Guatemala have proven exceedingly difficult because migrants

are almost never willing to identify or testify against their smugglers. In some cases they hope for another chance to migrate to the United States with the smuggler's help and in others they are afraid of the smugglers or their organized crime connections.

Alonso, appearing groggy in blue jeans and a white golf shirt, said he was an onion grower who also sometimes sold land and automobiles.

Some of the detainees were flown to Guatemala City for their initial court appearances. The arrests come at a time of heightened tensions between Guatemala's President Alejandro Giammattei and Washington. □

In the first six months of 2022

Aruba has recovered 92 percent of tourism compared to 2019



ORANJESTAD – This week during a government's press conference, minister of Tourism and Public Health, Mr. Dangui Oduber gave a declaration. The minister presented some figures regarding the first six months of the current year for tourism on Aruba. Among other things, he spoke about the amount of visitors received, the performance of the hotels, and the general recovery of tourism.

Minister Oduber said that he is very satisfied with the way in which tourism is developing on Aruba, saying that tourism on Aruba saw a recovery of 92 percent compared to the year 2018. According to the minister of Tourism, if it wasn't for the month of January when Aruba felt the effects of the Omicron variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, Aruba would have already reached the levels of 2019, which was a record year for tourism on Aruba.

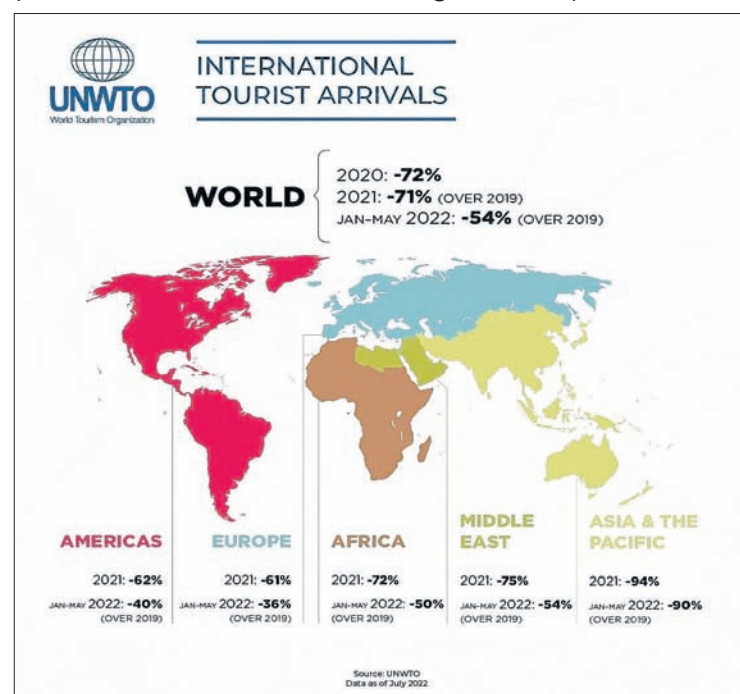
Aruba is seeing an exceptional recovery, one that is among the best in the whole world. The average figures for tourism recovery around the world sit at 46 percent, and in our region around 60 percent.

In the last three monthly reports of the Aruba Tourism Authority, it was demonstrated that during the last three consecutive months (April with 108 percent; May with 103 percent; June with 103 percent), the recovery on Aruba is surpassing that of the year 2019. The report of the figures for the month of July is still not published, but it's expected that this will also surpass the figures of July 2019. According to IMF, Aruba is the second country in the world with the best recovery of its tourism.

In the press release, minister Oduber said that he is working in a way that there is good cooperation with

all partners in the tourism sector. He thanked all partners that work together in the tourism industry, and all those who have made this possible – without leaving out the Ministry of Tourism.

To finalize, minister Dangui Oduber said he will continue focusing on the growth of Aruba's tourism in the context of this year, the year of recovery, in order to maintain this trend.



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Ray Ellin hosts and produces the shows. Considered by his peers to be the best host in NYC, Ray is known as "Aruba Ray" because of his passion for Aruba. Ray has been coming to Aruba every month for the past ten years, and produces and hosts these incredible comedy shows on the island. He is a popular comedian in New York, and has brought his talent and colleagues to Aruba.

The shows are at 9pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday until August 11th, in the Marriott Ocean Club Resort.

Full dinner menu is available, must arrive by 7:15pm for that. Otherwise, arrive by 8:30pm for the show.

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Post Aruba emits a stamp series to commemorate its 130th anniversary

Oranjestad - To commemorate the 130th anniversary of Aruba's postal service, on August 1, 2022, Post Aruba NV has issued a souvenirs sheet with 3 postal stamps, and a First Day Cover envelope, that were designed by Mr. Nigel Mathew.

This unique emission represents the transport of letters and packages over the past 130 years by means of images of postmen, transport-vehicles, mailboxes and envelopes.

The first postal activities on the island consisted of sending and receiving mail from boats originating from Curaçao and at times Venezuela. Garibaldi Cephais Helder received the mail that came in on the boats. The announcement of the mail's arrival took place in

the harbor of Oranjestad - all public mail had to be collected at the auxiliary post office. People used all means of transportation to pick-up their mail - horses, donkeys, boats, but most of them came on foot. Afterwards, letters and packages did also start being transported via air by airplane.

Currently, on arrival of mail at the post office, mail is sorted and distributed by postmen to their final designated addresses.

Envelopes being scattered in the air, symbolizes the variety of directions that mail was sent to all corners of the world.

The red, white and blue borders of airmail envelopes became a recognizable trademark for "airmail".

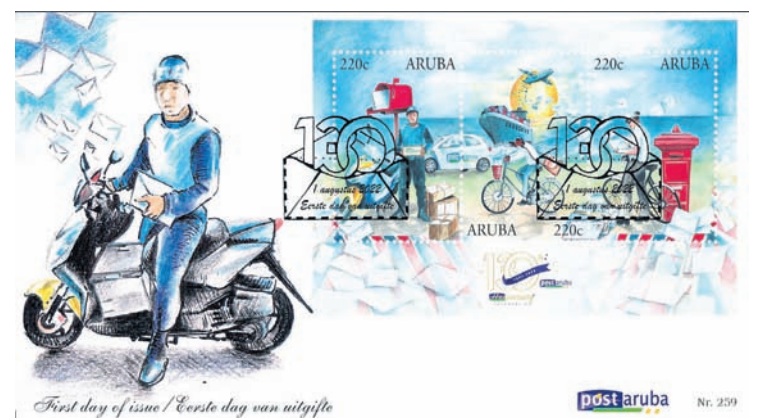
The different uniforms of the postmen indicate the

different periods in time. The use of vehicles went from bicycle to motorcar to scooter.

The red vintage standing letterbox goes back to the early years of postal service and a few have survived and can still be seen in Aruba, while the mailbox at the entrance of homes has changed its shape and size over the years, but has maintained its function and has become a contemporary element in house facades.

This stamp series and First Day Cover envelope are available at all the Post Office locations, namely in Oranjestad and San Nicolas, and online on www.postaruba.com/stamp-shop

For more information on the "130 Years of Post Aru-



ba" stamps serie please visit the Facebook page: [postaruba.com/philatelic/](https://www.facebook.com/postaruba.com/philatelic/) or Web-



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Article by Etnia Nativa

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Survival of our ancient expressions

Episode CLXIV-165

Etnia Nativa through Island Insight facilitates cultural awareness, education and safeguards Aruba's heritage by elevating each reader into an island keeper state of mind. Be encouraged to discover in every episode the true native effect, live it and discover more reasons to love Aruba behind our beaches by liven up your stay in an incredibly wonderful way through this cultural blog.

Our island is a tiny tourist destination with a fragile ecosystem, covering thousands of years of history. Here is where Etnia Nativa's main objective comes to mind through educating the readers over Aruba's heritage. We believe in when you love and value what you have; ones greatest desire becomes to protect it.

In this episode we will try to share our perspective and concerns regarding the native heritage of Aruba since during the next week, starting on August 9, the Day of the Indigenous Peoples will be celebrated, an event that recognizes the achievements and contributions of these peoples our predecessors. It is precisely these peoples who and through their ancestral knowledge, guided us to adapt, mitigate and reduce climate risks and environmental disasters.

For indigenous people, the territory is the womb that nurture and gave rise to the existence of their cultures, morality and right to their native identity.

The ancestral way of the territorial ownership is characterize by the right to the land as a collective property. This sence of responsibility takes care and protect. Practized and enjoyed by our native communities. Arubans are descendants of ancient farmers, fisherman, seafarers who mirated a few thousan years ago from tropical forests of South America, Arawak-speaking peoples who arrived in the continental coastal areas and they populated the islands of the Caribbean Sea. In "our beloved rock" (Episode 153) it was the legendary Caquetio tribe who had the first contact with the Castilians.

The territories of this legendary Caquetian tribe covered a geographic area delimited by permanent



sacred, social, economic and cultural boudaries and borders that enclosed the of influence and activities of the peoples. Crops of corn, beans, squash, cassava, peanuts as well as vegetables, fruits, cotton and tabaco were common; in addition, they took advantage of the riches of the mangrove forests and the great variety of fish and shell-fish.

At that time Aruba was covered with lush flora and general conditions were much more favorable than today. The landscape and topography of the island in many areas offered perfect layouts that formed zones where people could walk for hours under the canopy of Aruba's mesquite forest, trees that blocked out sunlight, however there were also open grasslands or savannas covered in grass. cacti and xerophytes, while other hilly and rocky or wetlands and salt flats.

For the indigenous, the relationship with

their territory is essential and vital for communal existence. Today this responsibility falls on the heirs of these original inhabitants and the promotors at "Etnia Nativa" (Native Ethnicity) by making locals and visitors aware of our unfathomable resources that, without due attention, could be lost forever.

In addition to sharing cultural knowledge Aruba also has a considerable group of indigenous descendants who advocate a cure for the island, grouped in various environmental organizations, NGO's and Native warriors action group who stands in defense of our fragile ecosystem and our endangered heritage running a sad fate of extinction by overexploitation. It is very important that Aruba recognize and support native identity, preserving it for our future generations.

Cultural awareness, interests and dicipline facilitates sustainable development at its core. The benefits of preserving one's own culture is essential to keep true history alive. The real identity, the collective memories and the mentality of belonging to the natural world.

If you love Aruba its origins and its cultural heritage, be part of the exclusive visitors of Etnia Nativa: a cozy museum/home.

Etnia Nativa a private residential houses collections of native art, archaeological artifacts and historic furniture, while the facilities themselves are the result of the transformation of recycled materials. Meet Anthony Croes, our columnist at his home! Book your visit Whatsapp + 297 592 2702- or mail: etnianaativa03@gmail.com



Jeremy Ruiz: "I managed to deal and live with seven different voices in my head"

Even though he has faced many situations in his life and was diagnosed with schizophrenia, a mental condition which causes him to hear seven different voices, he managed to overcome and live with them every day. Now, Jeremy Ruiz feels happy and at peace.

In an interview with our reporter, Jeremy Ruiz said that six years ago he gave a presentation to the director of Aruba's correctional facility, KIA, and to some departments. Now Ruiz is on vacation in Aruba, to marry his partner Jennifer. Here he explains that he likes to come back to Aruba to tell those who are interested how he sees certain aspects of his life, and he always like giving back to Aruba.

Ruiz told us he was born in the Netherlands and came to live in Aruba as a child. But when he was 25 years old, he decided to go to the Netherlands in order to get a better understanding of the mental condition from which he was suffering, schizophrenia. Living back in the Netherlands, Ruiz learned to see his condition in a different way, "in a more positive way, not like an illness, but like something to deal with that doesn't necessarily require medication".

He categorizes himself as a 'voice listener', because he hears seven different voices every day. He is aware that he has been hearing them for five years now. When he was a child, at 13 he began experiencing with addictive substances, and when he was 19 he was sent to a rehabilitation center in Santo Domingo, and this is how he was diagnosed with schizophrenia. "I think that was when I was around 21 or 22", he says.

Ruiz says that nowadays in psychiatry when a person receives a diagnosis of hearing voices in their

head, that's usually a symptom of another problem – as happens with people who experienced trauma or who are addicted to alcohol. As time went on, he began taking medication to try to remove the voices from his head, but never succeeded.

"Instead, I started suffering secondary effects from the medications, my tongue would swell, every three days I could sleep because the medications were accumulating in my system and I couldn't get up because of them", Ruiz says.

Because of this, he spoke with his father and said that that was no way to live, because the voices he was hearing were not becoming less, and he was getting more problems with the medication itself compared to when he was using substances. So he got help from his father to move to the Netherlands to find another way to cope with the voices he was hearing.

In the Netherlands he met groups who see voice hearing as an experience of special senses. Ruiz says that there are also people who feel things on their skin, for example. Came a time that the amount of voices he was hearing increased, and now he hears seven different voices. "My mind projects a form for them, and just as when I speak to people, I can see them when I speak with them."

He declared that his family has been a big help in his life and they accept that the voices are part of him, and are not trying to change him. "They always loved me, even though they might not understand or know, as a mother, father or partner, they don't know what it is because they can't feel nor see it. But they know as a partner to accept the behavior, the thought, the daily life, because every day from when I wake up in the morning until I fall asleep at night – I even dream with

the voices", he says.

Ruiz chooses several moments each day when he sits and drinks coffee with the voices. One of them he calls the 'coffee break', where he sits and talks with the voices, makes a checklist how the situation is on that day. "My approach is to see what the voices need so that they can be happy, so I can be happy, we can be happy, instead of acting like they don't exist. I deal with the problem."

Ruiz is a person who gives lessons and guidance to people who are residents of mental health facilities in the Netherlands. "I try to help them when they have to deal with problematic or annoying voices. Each day I let the loudest voice, the one that needs the most attention – for which I have a collection of text, paintings, something on which the voices feel reflected – and this way my relationship with the voices changed. Instead of being my enemy, they became a friend. I'm conscious that each voice has its character and their own way of being. I have one that I call the pessimist; he can never see things in a good way. But with time I learned to use what he says to help me."

Ruiz says that before he felt less in control because he didn't understand the situation, but through reading books and learning from experience at the same institute where he received help, he got the opportunity to start in the school system, six years ago. Each time he starts with a new class with a new group in three different places in the Netherlands, he gives lectures and presentation. "The basis is that the one who went through the experience can help another to deal with their experience", he says.

Regarding the mental health system in Aruba, Ruiz says if he hadn't re-



ceived help 16 years ago, he wouldn't have made it to the Netherlands. "Fundacion pa Maneho di Adiccion (Addiction Management Foundation) in Sero Colorado coached me, that's where I came from. They helped me prepare to go to the Netherlands. Even though I don't live on Aruba now, that helped me to go as far as I went, together with my father. Although there might be people who say this isn't fruitful, I can say that it did work for me."

His message is that "sometimes, people need to see certain life lessons and certain things that happen with people in Aruba, and remove the taboo to talk about the subject. Just giving something a name, and then act like it doesn't

exist by giving medication or keeping someone at home is not a solution. My mother and father made sure that I could go to the Netherlands and still have a study in sport. That's where I began finding psychological and psychiatric help, where I said I no longer wanted help to silence the voices. They heard me, over there organizations help in different ways, they see it differently. I found something that allows me to live at peace, I don't feel negatively towards it and it doesn't break me. Since I made peace with the voices I hear and their influence on my character and way of thinking, I feel happy. I just got married, I have a twelve year old son, and I feel happy and at peace."

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

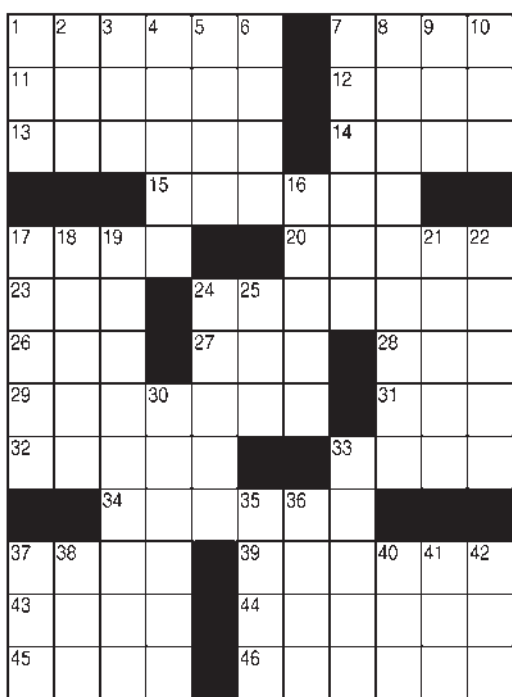
- 1 Humbled
- 7 Noah count?
- 11 Fight
- 12 Columbus setting
- 13 Iron's target
- 14 Like some cheese
- 15 Rodeo rope
- 17 Stare stupidly
- 20 Ranch animal
- 23 Tough wood
- 24 Door-opening phrase
- 26 Runner on snow
- 27 Rival
- 28 Top pitcher
- 29 Watches another's dog, say
- 31 Was a pioneer
- 32 Cuss
- 33 Pub brews
- 34 Wild laughs
- 37 Traveling
- 39 Put in a box
- 43 Magnet end
- 44 Hot
- 45 Sinuous fish
- 46 Like lords

DOWN

- 1 Jackson 5 hit
- 2 Soap unit
- 3 Put away
- 4 Celery serving
- 5 "Frozen" queen
- 6 Some bucks
- 7 Soup choice
- 8 Tire type
- 9 Well output
- 10 Lawn material
- 16 Archipelago
- 17 Shocked
- 18 Crooked
- 19 British government
- 21 Game host
- 22 Oboe parts
- 24 Burning
- 25 Building site
- 30 Be agreeable
- 33 Fancy neckwear
- 35 High home
- 36 Opposed
- 37 Clumsy one
- 38 Misery
- 40 Completely
- 41 View
- 42 Put a stop to



Yesterday's answer



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

8-3

CRYPTOQUOTE

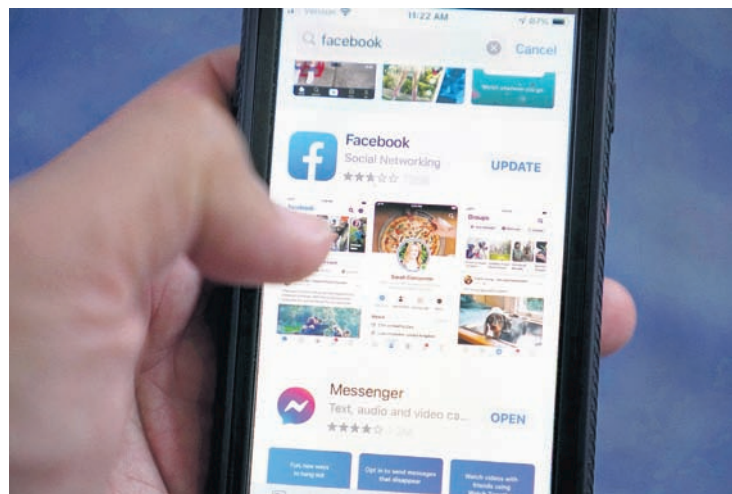
U NQGPBH GJ ZBP ICZ RBZIJ

SZL UBH YZDPJ SZL TLJF FCP

JUVP. — PYWPQF CLWWUQH

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: NEVER PUT OFF TILL TOMORROW WHAT YOU CAN DO THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW. — MARK TWAIN

Millennial Money: This year's summer travel FOMO is real



The Facebook app is shown on a smart phone, Friday, April 23, 2021, in Surfside, Fla.

Associated Press

By DALIA RAMIREZ of Nerd-Wallet

Views from a tower in Portugal, gondolas in Venice, beaches in the Bahamas as you scroll through your social media feeds, it seems like everyone you've ever met is on a picturesque vacation this summer. Compared to the last two years, 2022 is seeing a steep increase in travel, especially international, and it may feel impossible to keep up. The number of outbound international U.S. flights increased about 97% year-over-year from April 2021 to April 2022, according to U.S. International Air Travel Statistics. Airbnb data from May 2022 also showed an all-time high in long-term stay bookings, with U.S. travelers gravitating toward Italy, Mexico, Costa Rica and the Bahamas as well as domestic beach destinations.

If you're not planning to travel this year, hearing about other peoples' vacations might give you a twinge of FOMO: fear of missing out. But don't let comparisons pressure you into panic-booking a trip that could upend your finances. Even with time and budget constraints, it's possible to have a fun-filled summer.

HOW ARE PEOPLE AFFORDING THIS?

For many travelers, this summer is an opportunity to travel for the first time in two years, and the anticipation makes it worth the cost. Some are likely even willing to overextend their

budgets or go into debt to be able to take their dream vacation.

"It's pent-up demand," says George Hobica, founder of Airfarewatchdog.com. "People saved up a lot of money over the past two years and can afford the price increases." For many, the shift to remote work has also made travel more accessible. Yaslynn Rivera, a Los Angeles-based executive assistant at a video-streaming company, makes the most of working remotely by taking opportunities she would have otherwise been unable to pre-COVID-19. "I have friends from childhood and college who live all over the country now," she said. "If I'm going somewhere, it's because I know someone there," she added, explaining her near-constant location changes. She stays with friends instead of booking hotel rooms and Airbnbs, and when she does book a room, she sticks to a tight budget.

"I don't mind being inconvenienced to have the experience," she says, citing motel rooms, red-eye flights and working from the road. Though some travelers are in a position this summer to afford luxurious trips, travelers like Rivera make the most of the opportunities and connections they have, even if it means sacrificing convenience. If you work remotely and have a flexible schedule, trying Rivera's approach could be a good way to add more

travel to your summer.

THE SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE

Despite the realities, social media can still make travel look like a Pinterest-worthy paradise. "There's definitely a fear of missing out," says Giacomo Moriondo, a Chicago-based client services manager at an aviation services company, referring to seeing friends post from scenic destinations.



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WK 7 and 14 - all views

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Assistant Director

Xiomara Arends

Editors

Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks

Sales

Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Columnists

Anthony Croes

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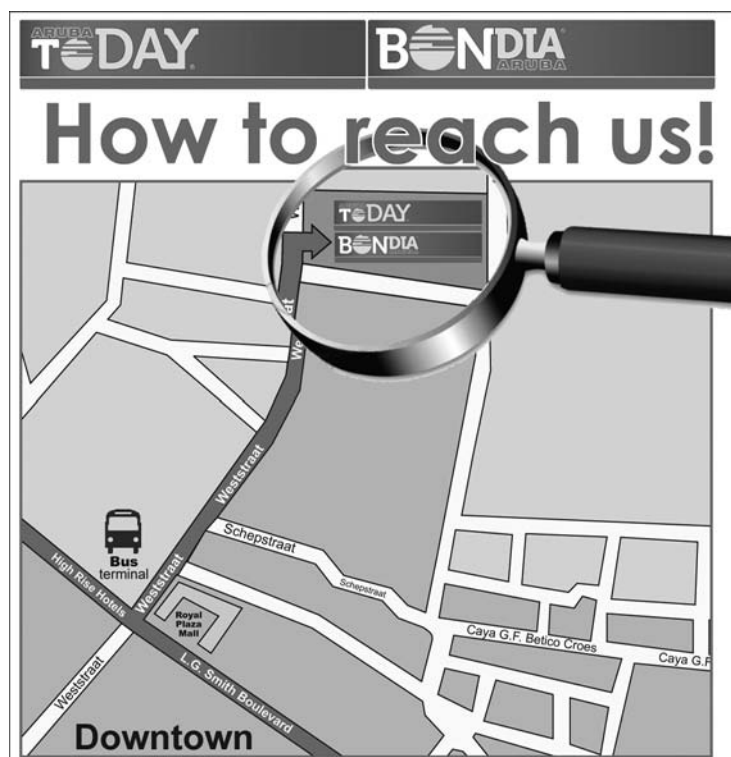
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Oliver Jackson-Cohen charms, mystifies in thriller 'Surface'

By **ALICIA RANCILIO**
Associated Press

Hey, casting agents, listen up. Oliver Jackson-Cohen is interested in lighter roles. That doesn't mean he hasn't enjoyed the darker, sometimes scarier fare he's mostly appeared in throughout the past few years but his mother says he needs a break.

Mom's commentary came last year when Jackson-Cohen arrived in Vancouver to film the new series "Surface" now streaming weekly on Apple TV+. She said to him, "'You're not going to play one of your sad boys, are you?'

"I went, 'What?' She said, 'You're always (expletive) sad. Do something light that I can go and enjoy watching,'" Jackson-Cohen laughed. "So that sort of stuck with me."

It's been a busy few years. Jackson-Cohen's recent career highlights include Netflix's "The Haunting of Hill House" series and its follow-up "The Haunting of Bly Manor." He also terrorized Elisabeth Moss in "The Invisible Man" and played Dakota Johnson's controlling husband in "The Lost Daughter." He did get a respite, however, in this summer's rom-com "Mr. Malcolm's List," an experience he describes as "a joyful romp."

In "Surface," Jackson-Co-



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Oliver Jackson-Cohen in "Surface."

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hen stars opposite Gugu Mbatha-Raw as James, a husband desperately trying to keep the pretenses of a happy marriage afloat after an accident caused his wife, Sophie (Mbatha-Raw), to lose her long-term memory. The more James tries to masquerade past problems, the more suspicious and distant Sophie becomes.

"There's something so inter-

esting when someone's sitting on a bunch of secrets," he said. "That creates so much tension, and if you're not allowed to say certain things and you're holding so much back, it can be read in a multitude of different ways. Hopefully it's worked and it does come across as overprotective or controlling or whatever it is or, sinister. But hopefully, you know, as the show goes

on and the layers are sort of peeled, you realize what is all underneath that."

Veronica Webb, the creator and showrunner of "Surface," says it's the balance of mystique and likeability that makes "something super special about Olly's performance" in the series. "He's got an intensity that can feel very dangerous, but also extremely charismatic and magnetic

and draw you in. I remember the first time we got to meet in person. There was a song playing and he started doing a little shoulder dance and I was like, 'That is the most goofy, charming thing on earth.' And we ended up writing it (in a scene,) he seems a little bit menacing in the subtext, but also has this immense charm to him. I think that's the duality of James."

Jackson-Cohen says he finds that playing flawed people is therapeutic.

"I don't know what it says about me, but I'm drawn to the pain that's in people. I find the release of that incredibly comforting, which sounds so messed up. It really does feel like an outlet which sounds like a complete and utter actor."

For now, Jackson-Cohen is back in Vancouver filming a series for Prime Video called "Wilderness" opposite Jenna Coleman, which he describes as "not lighthearted at all." Next up, he's hoping there will be another season of "Surface" which he enjoys, in part, because he's known Mbatha-Raw for years.

"I did one of my first ever jobs with Gugu when I was 19. We did like an episode of some very questionable BBC thing. We've known each other since then, and she's such a wonderful human being." □

New York prisons lift ban on book about Attica uprising



State police in riot gear regain control of prisoners following the Attica prison riot in Attica, New York, Sept. 1971. The riot, in which 43 were killed, lasted four days during which guards were held as hostages.

Associated Press

By **MAYSOON KHAN**

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — New York authorities have lifted

a ban that had stopped state prison inmates from reading a book about the

1971 Attica Correctional Facility uprising following a First Amendment lawsuit brought by its author.

State officials, however, said they will continue to censor one small part of the Pulitzer-prize winning book for security reasons. A two-page map of Attica will be removed from copies sent into the prisons.

Author Heather Ann Thompson, a historian and professor at the University of Michigan, sued the state's prisons in March over the ban on her book "Blood in the Water: The Attica Uprising of 1971."

Published in 2016, the book is one of the most compre-

hensive accounts of the uprising, where more than 1,300 inmates took over part of a prison in upstate New York to protest years of mistreatment. It ended when state troopers and guards shot tear gas into a prison yard before firing hundreds of rounds into the smoke. In total, 32 inmates and 11 staff were killed, with no law enforcement officers put on trial for their role in the massacre.

"People have a right to read, and people have a right to history," Thompson said in a statement when the lawsuit was filed. "We also have a right to have our books read. It's a

shame we live in a country where we censor people and ideas."

She was represented in the lawsuit by the Civil Rights Clinic at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law and the New York Civil Liberties Union.

Last week, the state attorney general's office said in a letter to a U.S. judge in Manhattan that the ban would be lifted, but only in paperback copies where the map can be removed. If a correctional facility rejects a request for an order of the book, prison officials are now legally obligated to send Thompson notice of that. □

Reddick win shows RCR can overcome internal turmoil

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) —

There was no masking Richard Childress' anger when he learned star driver Tyler Reddick was leaving his race team. Reddick's current contract runs through 2023 and he told his boss he was moving on when it expires only 10 days after scoring his first career Cup Series win.

Childress was livid in his initial response, saying the "timing of this announcement could not be any worse," and his grandson, Reddick's teammate Austin Dillon, was equally unimpressed.

"For all the hard work and effort that your guys put in for you, it can affect you going into the playoffs, even though you say it's not going to," Dillon said.

Turns out it isn't affecting Reddick, who picked up his second win in five races on Sunday with a victory on the road course at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. And it isn't hurting the No. 8



Tyler Reddick, center, and Alexa De Leon, right, celebrate after kissing the bricks following Reddick's win in the NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Sunday, July 31, 2022, in Indianapolis.

Associated Press

team, partly because Childress took a day to calm down, regroup, and deliver a message to the organization.

"After they made their an-

nouncement, I thought about it a lot that night, gave it a lot of thought, and it's more than just about one person. It's about a team," Childress said.

"Stayed up most of the night thinking about what I should do, how I wanted to handle it. I went in the next day and told the whole team 'it wasn't a perfect

circumstance the way it went down, but we're going to give it everything we've got this year, and we'll see where we go next year.' "

Make no mistake, though: Childress was adamant Reddick a driver he's referred to as "the next Cale Yarborough" will fulfill his contract and drive his car next season.

But for now? Well, any hurt feelings have been pushed aside as Reddick helps RCR contend for the Cup title. His win at Indy made him the first RCR driver since Kevin Harvick in 2013 to win multiple races in a season, and multiple victories for RCR in a season for the first time since 2017.

Crew chief Randall Burnett said the key to finding success in a strained situation was understanding Reddick's decision is "a business deal." "We've still got a lot of racing left to do with Tyler, and that's what I told our guys. □

Formula One's Lewis Hamilton joins Broncos ownership group

By ARNIE STAPLETON
AP Pro Football Writer

Rob Walton is adding seven-time Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton of Britain to the Denver Broncos' new ownership group.

Hamilton, 37, who drives for the Mercedes team and whose 103 career victories are the most in F1 history, is the third limited partner brought aboard by the Walton-Penner ownership group headed by Walmart heir Rob Walton, his daughter, Carrie Walton Penner, and her husband, Greg Penner.

"Excited to join an incredible group of owners and become a part of the Broncos story!!" Hamilton tweeted.

"Honored to work with a world class team and serve as an example of the value of more diverse leadership across all sports."

Commissioner Roger Goodell has made minority ownership a point of emphasis in the league. Hamilton is Black, as are the



Second placed Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain celebrates on the podium after the Hungarian Formula One Grand Prix at the Hungaroring racetrack in Mogyorod, near Budapest, Hungary, Sunday, July 31, 2022.

Associated Press

new ownership group's two other limited partners, Starbucks board chair Mellody Hobson and former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

The Walton-Penner group won the bidding for the Broncos with a \$4.65 billion offer, the highest price paid

for any sports franchise in the world. NFL owners are meeting in Minneapolis next week to approve the sale.

Once that happens, Walton, who has an estimated net worth of \$60 billion, will become the league's richest owner.

"We're delighted to welcome seven-time Formula One World Champion Sir Lewis Hamilton to our ownership group," Walton said in a statement. "He is a champion competitor who knows what it takes to lead a winning team and a fierce advocate for global

equality, including in his own sport.

"With over 100 race wins, Lewis is considered the most successful F1 driver of all time," Walton added. "His resilient spirit and standard of excellence will be an asset to the ownership group and the Broncos organization."

Broncos quarterback Russell Wilson saluted his friend Hamilton on Twitter before Tuesday's practice.

Wilson and his wife, Ciara, were guests of Hamilton's race team at the Monaco Grand Prix this year.

The Pat Bowlen Trust has run the franchise for several years and the trustees put the club up for sale after the children of late owner Pat Bowlen couldn't agree on which one of them would succeed their father. The trustees wanted Britanny Bowlen, 32, to take over. She stepped down from her job as the team's vice president of strategy following the Walton-Penner ownership group's winning bid. □

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Padres obtain Juan Soto from Nationals in blockbuster deal

By **BERNIE WILSON** and **STEPHEN WHYNO**
AP Sports Writers

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The San Diego Padres acquired superstar outfielder Juan Soto from the Washington Nationals on Tuesday in one of baseball's biggest deals at the trade deadline, vaulting their postseason chances by adding one of the game's best young hitters.

The Padres also obtained first baseman Josh Bell while sending a haul of players to Washington that included rookie left-hander Mackenzie Gore, first baseman/DH Luke Voit and prospects James Wood, C.J. Abrams, Robert Hassell III and Jarlin Susana.

Voit was a late addition to the deal after San Diego first baseman Eric Hosmer declined to waive a no-trade provision, according to a person with direct knowledge of the move who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because negotiations were ongoing at the time.

After reeling in Soto, a generational talent who turns 24 in late October, San Diego general manager A.J. Preller also acquired infielder Brandon Drury from Cincinnati. The Padres sent minor league shortstop Victor Acosta to the Reds for the 29-year-old Drury, who has a career-high 20 homers this year.

After contributing to the Nationals' first championship in franchise history in 2019, Soto hit .351 in 2020 to win the NL batting title. He has been walked more than any other player in major league baseball over the past two seasons. "The atmosphere here is they want to win, and not just go to the playoffs but win a World Series," said All-



Washington Nationals' Juan Soto bats during a baseball game against the New York Mets at Nationals Park, Monday, Aug. 1, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press

Star closer Josh Hader, who was obtained by San Diego on Monday in another big deal with Milwaukee. "That's a contagious atmosphere to be a part of."

San Diego began the season with a luxury tax payroll of \$229.3 million, just below the first threshold, and the trades push the Padres into tax territory for the second straight season. Soto is owed \$5,978,022 for the rest of this season and Bell \$3,516,844.

The package of prospects going to Washington is one of the most touted groups ever involved in one deal. Gore and Abrams debuted in San Diego this season after ranking among the sport's elite minor leaguers, Hassell and Wood are both top 100 prospects according to MLB.com, and Susana was considered the best pitcher available in the 2021-22 international free agent class.

Washington general man-

ager Mike Rizzo set a lofty asking price last month after reports emerged that Soto rejected the team's latest contract offer of \$440 million over 15 years.

"We set the bar very, very high, and one team exceeded it and that's the deal we made," Rizzo said. "Props to the San Diego Padres. They're not afraid, and ownership's not afraid and A.J. Preller's not afraid and they were aggressive and we made a deal that you call historical."

Soto remains under team control for two more seasons after this one, which made it no sure thing the Nationals would trade him now. The Padres getting him for potentially three playoff runs even absent a new deal made this the peak of Soto's value.

That uncertainty began weighing on Soto, who said after Sunday's game against St. Louis: "I just want to get it over with and see

what's going to happen. Start over here or wherever I'm at."

He gets to start over in San Diego in the midst of his second All-Star season, part of a loaded lineup that also includes All-Star Manny Machado and Fernando Tatis Jr. when the shortstop returns from a broken left wrist.

"It's pretty impressive to have those three types of guys on one team in the same lineup," said Wil Myers, the Padres' longest-tenured player. "Excited to see that trio, hopefully in the next week or two."

Tatis could be 10 days to two weeks away from being added to the active roster.

With little protection around him in Washington's lineup, Soto hit .246 with 20 home runs and 45 RBIs and 91 walks in 101 games.

In 2,435 plate appearances since making his Nationals debut in 2018, Soto is

batting .291 with 118 home runs and 357 RBIs. He's only a couple of years removed from slugging .695 with a 1.185 OPS and .490 on-base percentage — all NL bests. Soto becomes the latest Nationals player to be traded as part of the organization's long-term rebuild and with ownership looking to sell the team. Rizzo traded shortstop Trea Turner, ace Max Scherzer, power hitter Kyle Schwarber and five others at the deadline last year, and Washington has let Bryce Harper, Anthony Rendon and others move on in free agency.

The quintet of young players coming from San Diego could join the ones acquired last year — including pitcher Josiah Gray and catcher Keibert Ruiz — as the core of Washington's next contender.

Gore, a 23-year-old left-handed pitcher, had a 1.50 ERA through his first nine starts this year but is now on the injured list with elbow inflammation. Abrams struggled as a fill-in for injured Tatis at shortstop to begin the season, but he's only 21 and has hit .314 at Triple-A.

The 20-year-old Hassell, the No. 8 overall pick in the 2020 amateur draft, hit an RBI single in last month's All-Star Futures Game. Wood, a 19-year-old outfielder and second-round selection in last year's draft, is batting .321 with 10 homers and 45 RBIs for Class-A Lake Elsinore. Susana, an 18-year-old right-hander, has a 2.45 ERA with 44 strikeouts in 29 1/3 innings with San Diego's complex league team.

"We were fortunate that it was a well-rounded trade," Rizzo said. "We've got two pitchers, two outfielders and a shortstop, which fit our needs perfectly." □